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Christian Community

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One Family and International Students

By Janice D. Miller

In the past my personal contribution to world peace seemed very futile because I felt sure that what I did toward peace would have little impact. About two years ago the Michigan Council of Church Women decided to undertake as a peace project work with international students in the colleges and universities in the state. This was the incentive for our family to have students for periods varying from a week-end to eight months. We invite them to live with us as a member of the family, not as a guest who must be entertained. We have had twenty-one persons from ten countries. They are our friends; we know and understand them. We hope they have a better picture of an average American family and how it lives every day.

My husband is a banker whose hobby is working with his hands. There is always some kind of a project going on about the house. This summer it was the building of a garage and driveway. The family does the work together. This was quite a shock to some of the boys who thought a banker was only a "gentleman" and would never come home, get into his work clothes, and shovel dirt! We hope that some idea of the dignity of labor got across to them.

Our two sons, ages fifteen and thirteen years, include them in the things they are doing—hobbies or sports.

If I'm going shopping, they may go along if they wish. They are fascinated with our super-markets. If the family has an invitation they are included for they are part of the "family". We invite them to go to church with us. I believe one of the most interesting week-ends we had was one which included a man from Burma who is a Buddhist, a man from Holland who is a Catholic, and a young man from Iran—a Moslem. All of us attended the Presbyterian Church. The Buddhist had never seen the inside of a Protestant church. Not only did we enjoy them, but they had a wonder-

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International Christmas at the Miller Home

"I Was a Stranger"

By Galen R. Weaver

Each year a larger group of students from abroad comes to our American colleges and universities, either by means of their own resources, or scholarships from institutions, or sent by their governments. Currently some 32,000 such "international students" are among us while perhaps 3,000 or more Americans are studying abroad. The American university has indeed become an international community with rich possibilities for exchange and for creating greater understanding. The students come from all countries — some even as refugees from behind the Iron Curtain. 6,000 of them are Chinese citizens—3,000 or so recent graduates. Several hundred are from Korea.

Perhaps these latter two groups are deserving of special sympathy. Said one student from Korea, "It is difficult to concentrate for an examination in chemistry when the news broadcast is reporting that my home town has just changed hands for the fifth time." Chinese students—or recent gradutes—are all too frequently without funds. Doctors, chemists, and engineers sometimes take jobs as dishwashers and janitors—if they can get employment at all. About 1,000 are on scholarships alloted by our own American government. All are under more or less pressure from the Mao government to return home to supply desperately needed skills. Relatives write appealing letters revealing that they are under cruel pressure to induce their return. Some do return. Thus a professor of mathematics who taught at the University of Illinois, upon landing at Hong Kong, was handed a statement he was forced to broadcast saying that he had been mistreated in the United States, that America is full of race hatred, that he was unhappy while here. He had to continue this propaganda. Not many months ago he jumped out of a window in a suicide attempt. At about the same time a Chinese student in a university in one of our Southern States committed suicide,

unable to withstand the anxieties to which he was subjected.

But all students from abroad have their problems—a strange language, a tangle of official regulations, foreign customs, different food, often difficult housing handicaps, novel educational procedures and homesickness—these are nearly universal. Students of color frequently meet discrimination and even insults. One of these from Nigeria was interviewed several years after he had returned to Lagos, the capital. Editor of a leading newspaper and proprietor of others, he is an influential figure as so many returned students come to be in their own lands. He said—"When I was studying in America I suffered treatment I shall never forget nor forgive. But what could we do about it? We were hopelessly outnumbered. Then one day in my sociology textbook at Ohio State University I read that for every white baby born in the world there are seven colored babies born. That gave me hope. I have been devoting my life ever since to aligning the colored race of the world so that we can turn the tables." More fortunate was another student guest from abroad who said—"I came to America to learn your science. I expected America to have a material view of all life. I return knowing that the science of America has not obscured the spiritual values of her people."

We know that both Americas exist. We would like the second America to prevail. One immediate practical way is to offer friendship to these strangers within our gates.

What Are They Looking For?

These potential friends from abroad have paid us the initial compliment of coming to our country to get some benefit for theirs. Most of them are here because of our technical and scientific advantages. But they deeply want more than techniques. They want (1) a sense of belonging, of being welcomed and wanted, of being appreciated as persons. And they are likely to be exceptional persons, carefully screened and sponsored because they show promise of future leadership in key positions at home. Further they want (2) to know individual Americans of all economic, racial and cultural backgrounds—to understand them as human beings and to find out what they think and feel and why. Also they want (3) to know our home and family life which is quite different from what they are accustomed to — our household management, our dietary, our relationships and shared interests—by means of informal and unstilted contacts. They say they are eager to know (4) our community life, the day to day ordinary things that go on in rural and urban neighborhoods—PTAs, churches, civil clubs, local government, professional and business organizations and the like. These things we so easily take for granted are immensely interesting to our friendly visitors.

Besides these things, students from abroad like to be encouraged to talk about their own countries — their customs, contributions, problems—provided their American hosts are not condescending towards these things as "inferior" or merely curious and exotic. Not infrequently politically alert visitors may wish to comment on American policies and practices in their own countries. Such comments may not be uniformly favorable. Some Americans are unable to listen to criticism or to entertain new and variant views and their defensiveness sets up barriers or reduces communication to the level of banality. In one situation a student from China, although closely indentified with the more conservative political group spoke realistically at a local church on the problem of China. His American hearers were so upset emotionally that the student was barely saved from expulsion from the university. He was labelled a "Communist".

While we are speaking of cautions, it will be well to warn prospective hosts not to be too fervently evangelical in their approach to non-Christian students. Some of these 32,000 are Christians, of course, and they should be warmly welcomed into the life of the local church, just as anyone else. But those who are Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists or agnostics will be more readily persuaded of the value of our faith by our character and behavior than by our words. Most of these individuals of other faiths or of none will be interested in the church as one aspect of American family and community living and, as Christians, we should invite them to our churches without apology but also without urging or pressure.

What Can We Offer?

Hundreds of Protestant families are actively extending the hospitality of their homes and churches to these men and women from abroad. Some follow the good custom of "adopting" one or several students. In some cases they are like "sons" and "daughters" where the children are grown up and away. Or they become older "brothers" and "sisters" of younger children.

Not only do children help to break down strangeness and timidity but they are greatly enriched by knowing intimately friends from other lands.

Dinners at home, family festivities at holiday time, picnics and excursions, theatre and concert parties, and similar shared experiences bring unforgettable joys to homesick strangers. Repeated contacts rather than "one shot" relationships deepen fellowship and make true sharing natural. Students coming in pairs, especially two who already know each other, can relieve initial timidity.

Another suggestion comes from those who have extended hospitality to many such strangers from other lands. It is "to bone up" a bit on the country or countries of the guests. Thus inane and obvious queries can be avoided and more intelligent and mutually stimulating discussion engaged in.

Fortunately on many campuses there are Foreign Student advisers or coordinating committees that help avoid neglecting some students and over-entertaining others. Where such a committee does not exist it is important to create a council or clearing house group.

Community Resources for Overseas Students, a pamphlet from the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students, 291 Broadway, New York 7, N.Y., is recommended for suggestions on this and related points.

Hospitality can very helpfully be extended to students enroute from the port of entry to the university chosen. Thus in Buffalo, N.Y. there is a committee that stands by to arrange overnight entertainment and meals to students enroute and to show them Niagara Falls and other interesting sights—a much appreciated bit of generosity and graciousness. In Jamestown, N.Y. and New Orleans, La. other key persons render similar service. Miss Ruth Haines of the

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Launch Essay Contest

A nation-wide essay contest on "The United States and the Under-developed Areas" will be launched by the National Council of the Churches of Christ on November 1, according to Ernest Lefever, associate executive director of the Department of International Justice and Goodwill. Open to all American youth between the ages of 15 and 23 years of age, the contest will end at midnight, March 31, 1953.

Contestants, whose essays must be kept to one thousand words or less, may write on any phase of the subject but are requested to deal with the moral responsibility both of the United States and of the underdeveloped countries.

There will be two sets of prizes, one for the high school age, 15 to 18 years, and one for the college age, 19 to 23 years; two two first prizes of $400 each, two second prizes of $200 each, two third prizes of $100 each, and twenty prizes of $25 each.

Posters announcing the contest and "Contest Instruction Leaflets" can be had on request from the Point IV Essay Committee, National Council of Churches, 79 E. Adams St., Chicago 3, Illinois.

International Relations Letter

October 1, 1952

For months, after Huber Klemme began publishing this "International Relations Letter," I wondered if anyone read it—and had no evidence one way or the other. Suddenly, the evidence arrived. A number of pacifist Christians lost no time in writing to say that they agreed with the layman whose letter I published in the June issue—and not with me. All these letters were carefully read and answered. Someone suggests that I do a major piece explaining why the C.S.A. does not take the position, say, of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Does anyone else think that would be a good idea? Let's, for the moment, say only that many earnest and thoughtful Christians do not find in the Bible or in Christian history or in the actual world situation a clear warrant for an absolute renunciation of armed power. This does not mean that they are any the less shaken by the horror of war or by the use of vast sums for armaments than are Christians who follow the pacifist way.

The Big Thing

Policy statements on international affairs by the C.S.A. or the C.C.S.A. have, we hope, some value. But the really important thing is not what is said in policy statements, even though they are the product of much thought and discussion. The big objective is to help local groups get their teeth into the great questions. In the long run, it's better to study and discuss and come to an, occasionally, poor conclusion than merely to accept conclusions reached by some other group, however wise they may happen to be. To put it in a little different fashion, the foreign policy of the U.S. is not going to have a good foundation until all of us (particularly Christians) in our local communities learn how to educate ourselves on foreign affairs and how to make our opinions count.

Therefore

Both the C.S.A. and the C.C.S.A. are working harder than ever to answer the old question: "What can we do in *our* church?" The C.C.S.A. had its "For Peace With Justice" emphasis. Huber reports that over 100 churches used the excellent materials he and his Commission prepared. The C.S.A. has a new "Tool Chest," containing, among other things, a usable program for a meeting on international relations. Write for it. (25c) The "Tool Chest" also has a new manual called "Tooling Up" that gives practical advice on how to organize a social action group.

Visual Aids

The number of good filmstrips and moving pictures on the United Nations and on many other aspects of foreign affairs is growing rapidly. If you have a machine, don't let it stand idle. Write to us for lists and suggestions.

If This Be Partisan

The political atmosphere being what it is, one has to be careful. No matter what you say, someone is going to charge you with following the political line of some party or organization. I'd like to make one comment which *could* be interpreted as politically partisan. One of the presidential candidates said he wished we would spend a little less time conducting post mortems on China and a little more time thinking about what we can do to help India. That sounds like mighty wise advice. One would like to shout it from the proverbial housetop: India is about where China was in 1945. If we don't want some day to be asking ourselves how it was that India was lost to the free world we'd better bestir ourselves. It's not inspiring to see people weeping over China (where, for the moment, we can do little) and hedging about help to India —where we can do something.

What's the Situation?

Indian officials tell us that the next five years may decide whether India goes Communist or stays in the democratic fold. The next national elections will be in 1957. If the Indian masses are substantially better off by that time Nehru, or someone like him, will be approved. If not, desperation and impatience may give the Communists a majority. Last January the U.S. government made a grant to India of 54 million dollars. To this the Indian government has added double the amount in its own currency. A really stirring program is under way. Community development projects are being set up in 16,000 villages, reaching 12 million rural people. The money goes for technical assistance, fertilizer production, agricultural implements, irrigation projects. About 40 American experts are on the job. More are being recruited.

Ambassador Bowles is urging that the U. S. give another one billion dollars in aid over the next four years. A lot of money? Yes, but set it against the 75 billions we are spending in 1952 for armaments and for past wars! Could we ever forgive ourselves if, five years from now, a communist government is in power in India and we had not stretched ourselves to the limit to help, while there was time?

So, Here's What To Do

I can visualize a local church committee putting on a church-wide program of education under some such theme as: "That India May Remain Free." (If you think that saving India from communism is not the noblest possible motive, I agree. We ought to help for other reasons. But it's permissible to want to save India from the wratched sort of thing we have in Russia and China.) When, then, the question of more aid to India is before the American people, you and your church will know what it's all about and will know what to say to Congress and to the Administration.

If you wish to put on such a program, write to us for materials. Of course, it is not only a question of what governments do. Let's not forget our missionaries, who are also a part of this picture. Private organizations, such as Nelson Rockefeller's American International Association for Economic and Social Development, are working toward the same end.

Every Church Can Help

No matter how small your group, you can work at a job like this. Make a survey of your resources. Make a plan, however modest, for putting the facts before your people. Get the minister to help. Call on your national offices. Let's stop moaning and go to work!

After Much Travelling

After a wonderful trip through six European countries the Reissigs are back at their desks. The Second C.S.A. European Seminar had a fine group of 22 people. Next summer's Seminar will be led by Ray Gibbons. There must be someone in your community who could go along. Perhaps you might help your minister to go. It's worth it.

Herman F. Reissig

WHO'S WHO

Janice D. (Mrs. Clifford R.) Miller is chairman of the International Student Project for the United Church Women of Michigan. Those wishing further information may address her at 521 Wildwood Ave., Jackson, Michigan.

Galen R. Weaver is Racial and Cultural Relations Secretary of the Council for Social Action.

One Family

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ful time getting to know each other.

With students that we have at least a week there is the opportunity to explain and demonstrate some of our customs and manners. In that length of time we have a basis of friendliness and confidence which makes them know we have their interests at heart. They learn to make a bed (because of anticipated dormitory life), how to operate and clean up a shower, how to set the table, etc. We have them measured for American sizes in shirts, sox, shoes. We try to forestall embarrassing situations that may arise for them living in a different culture.

We also learn of their customs, culture, modern problems. When they question, we try to explain the good and the bad points of our system of government so that they will have as honest and realistic a picture as we can give. We experience great satisfaction. It is something the average person can do in his own home as long as he is sincerely concerned about people and the world. Whatever is done with a few students and through a few homes will be a forward step in promoting understanding, good will, brotherhood, and peace.

"I Was a Stranger"

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Committe on Friendly Relations (address noted above) is prepared to make suggestions along this line.

Another gesture of goodwill and means of fellowship has been successfully made in terms of a smaller community organizing a representative committee, of civic and religious groups to sponsor the visit of ten to thirty students from abroad for a visit of one or several days. Families take them as guests and show them interesting features of the community life. Usually one or more features of the program are jointly planned and participated in—a corn roast, a country dance, a social party or entertainment. (An illustrated pamphlet on this type of activity may be had from the University Religious Council, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio).

Youth fellowships in local churches near campuses have frequently been very successful in providing warm fellowship to strangers from abroad. Similarly the United Student Fellowship chapters and the Student Christian Associations are in a favorable position to extend friendliness. Very often members of these groups provide a scholarship or other financial assistance for a student of another nation. Such Christian groups are a good source of information regarding speakers who may be available and have worthwhile messages for church groups. There is much talent among these international temporary members of our American academic communities. They should be used with discernment more frequently to help us Americans understand better the aspirations, viewpoints and contributions of people of other lands. —Galen R. Weaver.

Acknowledgement is made by Mr. Weaver of letters from a dozen persons who kindly replied to an inquiry asking what types of friendly outreach does your church sponsor in relation to foreign students; also which are most appreciated and valuable; and what special cautions or suggestions do you have regarding method and approach. Further information along these lines is hereby solicited and will be shared with others.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Additional copies may be obtained for 2 cents each. Requests from Congregational Christians should be addressed to Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York. Requests by Evangelical and Reformed, and others, as well as news items and communications, should be addressed to the Editor, Huber F. Klemme, Commission on Christian Social Action, 2969 West 25th Street, Cleveland 13, Ohio.

Churches Look At World

St. Paul's Church, Salina, Michigan, conducted four adult assemblies following the morning worship services on recent Sunday mornings. The pastor, the Reverend Alvin Siemsen, Professor Marshall Knappen of the University of Michigan, and Congressional candidates John Dawson and George Meader conducted discussions on faith, the United Nations, human rights, and technical assistance as factors making "for peace with justice."

Seven Evangelical and Reformed churches in the city of Philadelphia cooperated in a School on World Relations on five Sunday evenings. Sessions dealing with denominational Missions in Africa, Human Rights, the Church, and the United Nations were led by Dr. Dobbs F. Ehlman, executive secretary of the Board of International Missions, Dr. William Agar of the Special Services Division of the United Nations, and the Reverend Jefferson P. Rogers, race relations secretary of the Commission on Christian Social Action.

New Programs for Social Action 1952-1953

I. **TOOL CHEST.** A packet of materials for the organization and program of social action in the churches. Includes "Tooling Up," a manual for the organization of a committee; four programs — Migrants, Rase, Industrial, and International; announcements of other programs and SOCIAL ACTION. 25c available November 1st.

II. **CHRISTIAN BASIS FOR SOCIAL ACTION.** Four session discussion based on longer statement adopted by General Council, June 1952. A Group Leaders Manual of about 25 pages and additional copies of the printed statement for each member of the group. 50c available December 1st.

III. **CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP.** A program for participation on national legislation and governmental policies, for groups and individuals. Three or four packets including information, analyses and reply blanks for reporting individual and group opinion. Free. Available early 1953.

IV. **SOCIAL ACTION.** Six analyses of current issues. Subscription rate—$1.50.

- October—"The 1952 Election." A handbook on the candidates, issues, etc. 25c. Available after September 25th.
- November—"The Movies," Van Harvey. A study of the structure of the industry, its star system and the pressures for freedom and censorship.
- December—"Public Education," Robert Lynn. A Christian appraisal of the religious values in the public schools.
- February—"The Bureaucrat and the Workingman," William May. Analysis of the plight of white collar executives and workers in mass society.
- March—"The Billy Graham Movement," author to be secured. Based on studies of the movement by six research students.
- May—"The Ministers' Role in American Society," a symposium.

V. **CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.** Available to all ministers and members of social action committees and others upon request. Contains necessary information on social action programs and emphases, an International Relations page and, when Congress is in session, Legislative Information from Washington, D. C.

VI. **FILMSTRIPS**

"Rebirth in Roxbury—"documentary on an integrated church membership.

Available at Missions Council or state conference office.

A new filmstrip with sound on church social action will be available in February, 1953.

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